

University of Dundee

Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR)

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Three-Minute Teacher Assessments

Here there are three short assessments teachers can do with individual children. All three elements are highly predictive of future literacy skills according to the research survey. Altogether they will take about 10 minutes.

Letter Sounding

The attached sheet “Letter Sounding Assessment” can be printed out. It contains all the letters printed in random order. Show the sheet to the child (you might want to cover all except the first line as otherwise the child might be put off).

Explain to the child that you want them to do something and you are not going to help them. Ask the child “What sound does this letter make?” for each one. Point at the letter at the same time. Sometimes the child will give you a letter name instead – say “That is good, but that is a letter name from the alphabet. Can you tell me what **sound** that letter makes?”

Try not to give the child any clues by your expression whether they are right or wrong. Praise them for effort, not correctness. Only accept an immediate second guess at a letter – move on briskly so the child does not have a long time to ponder on one letter.

Stop the assessment after the child has been unable to identify eight consecutive items (there is no need to make children continue if they are struggling to this extent).

Do not record the child’s performance using ticks and crosses, since the child will see this and may become distracted. Use other marks such as O for correct and I for incorrect. You might want to do this on another copy of the sheet you have printed out.

If the children have great difficulty with the assessment, try giving them a clue. Show them one line of letters and say “Can you find the letter that makes the sound of X (sample letter)?” Even if they get this correct, do not score it O or I. You will need a third symbol – perhaps □.

Word Recognition

The attached sheet “Word Recognition Assessment” can be printed out. It contains 30 high frequency words printed in random order. Show the sheet to the child (you might want to cover all except the first line as otherwise the child might be put off).

Explain to the child that you want them to do something and you are not going to help them, but first you will show them what you want them to do. Look at the demonstration word (come) and say it out loud correctly. Explain you want the child to do the same for this and some other words. Point at the demonstration word and invite the child to say the word. Then point at the first assessment word and invite the child to try it.

Try not to give the child any clues by your expression whether they are right or wrong. Praise them for effort, not correctness. Only accept an immediate second guess at a word – move on briskly so the child does not have a long time to ponder on one word.

Stop the assessment after the child has been unable to identify eight consecutive items (there is no need to make children continue if they are struggling to this extent).

Do not record the child's performance using ticks and crosses, since the child will see this and may become distracted. Use other marks such as O for correct and I for incorrect. You may want to do this on another copy of the sheet that you have printed out.

If the children have great difficulty with the assessment, try giving them a clue. Show them one line of words and say "Can you find the word that says X (sample word)?" Even if they get this correct, do not score it O or I. You will need a third symbol – perhaps □.

Remember you are just checking word recognition here, so do not ask the children what the words mean – this would be an assessment of comprehension.

Phonemic Blending

The attached sheet "Phonemic Blending Assessment" can be printed out. It contains 30 high frequency phonemically regular words printed in random order. Show the sheet to the child (you might want to cover all except the first line otherwise the child might be put off).

Explain to the child that you want them to do something and you are not going to help them, but first you will show them what you want to do. Look at the demonstration word (c-a-t) and sound out c, a and t separately. Then show how to blend them together – first ca, then cat. Explain you want the child to do the same for this and some other words. Point at the demonstration word and invite the child to say the word. Then point at the first assessment word and invite the child to try it.

Try not to give the child any clues by your expression whether they are right or wrong. Praise them for effort, not correctness. Only accept an immediate second guess at a word – move on briskly so the child does not have a long time to ponder on one word.

Stop the assessment after the child has been unable to blend eight consecutive items (there is no need to make children continue if they are struggling to this extent).

Do not record the child's performance using ticks and crosses, since the child will see this and may become distracted. Use other marks such as O for correct and I for incorrect. You might want to do this on another copy of the sheet you have printed out.

You might need a third symbol for partially correct responses – perhaps □.

Remember you are just checking blending here, so do not ask the children what the words mean – this would be an assessment of comprehension.

Letter Sounding Assessment

e

c

r

g

b

n

q

a

t

u

x

j

s

w

i

k

o

f

m

y

v

d

h

i

p

z

Word Recognition Assessment

Demonstration: **come**

my	the	you	he
by	from	then	much
of	new	we	have
was	just	be	your
are	only	she	that
with	so	her	do
old	out	all	little
	made	said	

Phonemic Blending Assessment

Demonstration word: **cat**

at	cup	wet	tin
bus	hen	dog	fan
get	nap	fox	not
yes	pal	rag	kit
tug	pin	jam	top
rip	end	cat	rub
jet	mud	kid	zoo
cook	seek	dish	bath